

Garrett Park resident Andrea Rugh will be talking about her new book “Simple Gestures: A Cultural Journey Into the Middle East” in the Garrett Park Town Hall, March 7, from 4 to 6 p.m. Andrea’s book relates her experiences over 40 years living and working in 8 countries of the Middle East: Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. She describes the satisfactions and difficulties, the embarrassing miscommunications and the sudden insights that come from being immersed in a strange culture. She believes the best way to understand culture is to observe the way people interact with one another—the way they treat their poor, the elderly, and women; the way they bring up and educate their children, and the way they react to a foreigner suddenly thrust in their midst—all these elements of culture appear in her book. In her multiple roles, Andrea Rugh has come to know people from many walks of life. As mother, she became friendly with local families. As the wife of a diplomat who later became Ambassador in two countries, she came to know royal women in the Gulf. As a professional anthropologist, she spent time with the kinds of people usually not accessible to foreigners. Her book brings alive the people and places she met along the way.

Andrea has been a technical adviser for USAID development projects in the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa, a research associate for the Harvard Institute of International Development, and has worked for Save the Children and UNICEF in Pakistan and Afghanistan. She has written several books on Middle Eastern culture and society including *Family in Contemporary Egypt*, *Within the Circle: Parents and Children in an Arab Village*, and *The Political Culture of Leadership in the United Arab Emirates*. She is currently an adjunct scholar at the Middle East Institute in Washington, D.C. She received a BA from Oberlin College and a PhD from American University. She lives in Garrett Park and Woods Hole, Massachusetts.